

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for instant messaging on a computer system, including:
receiving an instant message (IM) containing content from a sender;
5 displaying an animated character associated with said sender; and
delivering said content to a user through said animated character.
2. The method of claim 1, further including:
determining an identification of said sender of said IM from said IM.
- 10 3. The method of claim 2, further including:
sending a request to a server with said identification of said sender; and
receiving said animated character associated with said sender from said server.
- 15 4. The method of any one of claim 1, wherein said delivering includes:
converting text from said IM into audio through text-to-speech synthesis; and
playing said audio.
- 20 5. The method of claim 4, wherein said delivering further includes:
animating said character in synchronization with said playing of said audio.
6. The method of claim 4, wherein said delivering further includes:
detecting an emoticon in said IM; and
animating said character in a way that reflects said emoticon.
- 25 7. The method of claim 1, wherein said displaying includes displaying said
animated character outside of an IM window.
8. The method of claim 7, further including allowing a user to move said animated
30 character anywhere on the screen.

9. The method of claim 1, further including:
periodically retrieving advertisement details from a server;
downloading an animated character specified to represent said advertisement;
displaying said animated character specified to represent said advertisement; and
5 delivering content specified for said advertisement.
10. The method of claim 1, further including:
sending an alert to a server;
receiving a response containing content from said server generated by an
10 artificial intelligence (AI) application;
displaying an animated character associated with said AI application; and
delivering said content to a user through said animated character associated with
said AI application.
- 15 11. The method of claim 10, wherein said sending an alert includes:
sending a message indicating that a web search is to be performed; and
sending keywords to search in said web search.
12. The method of claim 11, wherein said delivering said content comprises
20 delivering results of said web search.
13. The method of claim 1, further including:
allowing the user to select from one or more predefined animated characters to
be displayed on a recipient's computer system when said user sends an IM message to
25 said recipient.
14. The method of claim 1, further including:
allowing the user to upload an image to be used in creating an animated
character to be displayed on a recipient's computer system when said user sends an IM
30 message to said recipient.

15. A method for instant messaging on a digital communication system such as a computer system or digital telephone system or combination thereof, including:
receiving one or more instant messages (IM) containing content from one or more senders;
5 forming a queue by creating a dynamic array and inserting incoming message into said queue;
controlling the timing of operations of actions in the queue and when required displaying an animated character associated with said sender; and
delivering said content to a user through said animated character.
- 10 16. The method of claim 15 wherein the animated character can be displayed on an output screen without being bounded by the instant message (IM) window.
- 15 17. The method of claim 16 wherein a plurality of animated characters determined in the queue of messages from senders can be simultaneously displayed on the imaging screen and the messages are sequentially delivered through the respective sender's animated character.
- 20 18. The method of any one of claims 15 to 17 wherein the messaging window is continually scanned and compared with previous messaging to determine if message has been received, and if received analyses message and places in queue.
- 25 19. A method for managing an Instant Messaging (IM) system, including:
receiving a request from a user for an animated character, said request including an identification of a sender of an IM message to said user;
25 querying a database with said identification;
receiving information regarding said animated character from said database; and
forwarding said information regarding said animated character to said user.
- 30 20. The method of claim 19, wherein said information regarding said animated character includes a location for an animation file representing said animated character.

21. The method of claim 19, further including:
receiving a periodic request from said user for an advertisement;
selecting an advertisement from an advertising database; and
5 serving said advertisement to said user.
22. The method of claim 19, further including:
detecting when an alert is sent from said user in an IM message, said IM
message also including content;
10 passing said alert and said content to an artificial intelligence application;
receiving a response from said artificial intelligence application; and
forwarding said response to said user.
23. The method of claim 22, wherein said artificial intelligence application provides
15 interactive help to said user.
24. The method of claim 22, wherein said artificial intelligence application provides
web searching capabilities to said user.
- 20 25. The method of claim 19, further including:
receiving a message from said user indicating that the user wishes for all
messages to be forwarded to a device utilizing the Short Message Service (SMS) or
Multimedia Message Service (MMS) format;
retrieving an identification of said device from a database;
25 formatting a message intended for said user in SMS or MMS; and
forwarding said formatted message to a communications gateway along with
said identification.
26. The method of claim 25, wherein said identification is a cellular phone number.
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27. The method of claim 19, further including:

receiving an image from said user;
rendering said image as an animated character; and
saving said rendered image in said database.

5 28. The method of claim 27, further including:
cropping said image.

10 29. The method of claim 27, wherein said rendering comprises:
removing extraneous information from said image;
modifying said image to a three-dimensional image;
manipulating said image into preconfigured positions; and
interpolating movements from a base position to a new position for each of one
or more animations for said animated character to perform.

15 30. The method of claim 29, wherein said rendering further comprises:
introducing said image to a three-dimensional geometry engine.

20 31. An apparatus for instant messaging on a computer system, including:
an IM receiver;
an animated character displayer coupled to said IM receiver; and
an animated character content deliverer coupled to said animated character
displayer.

25 32. The apparatus of claim 31, further including:
a sender identification determiner coupled to said IM receiver.

30 33. The apparatus of claim 32, further including:
a server request sender coupled to said sender identification determiner; and
an animated character receiver coupled to said animated character displayer.

34. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein said animated character content deliverer includes:
a text-to-speech synthesizer; and
an audio player coupled to said text-to-speech synthesizer.
- 5 35. The apparatus of claim 34, wherein said animated character content deliverer further includes:
an animated character audio synchronizer.
- 10 36. The apparatus of claim 34, wherein said animated character content deliverer further includes:
an emoticon detector; and
an emoticon character animator coupled to said emoticon detector.
- 15 37. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein said animated character display includes an IM window-external character displayer.
38. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein said animated character display further includes an animated character mover.
- 20 39. The apparatus of claim 31, further including:
an advertisement details periodic retriever; and
an animated character downloader coupled to said advertisement details periodic retriever and to said animated character content deliverer;
- 25 40. The apparatus of claim 31, further including:
a server alert sender;
an artificial intelligence response receiver coupled to said animated character displayer and to said animated character content deliverer.
- 30 41. The apparatus of claim 40, wherein said server alert sender includes:

a web search message sender; and
a keyword sender coupled to said web search message sender.

42. The apparatus of claim 41, wherein said animated character content deliverer
5 comprises a web search results deliverer.

43. An apparatus for managing an Instant Messaging (IM) system, including:
an animated character request receiver;
a database query generator coupled to said animated character request receiver;
10 an animated character database information receiver; and
an animated character database information forwarder coupled to said animated
character database information receiver.

44. The apparatus of claim 43, further including:
15 a periodic advertisement request receiver;
an advertisement selector coupled to said periodic advertisement request
receiver; and
an advertisement server coupled to said advertisement selector.

20 45. The apparatus of claim 44, further including:
an alert detector;
an artificial intelligence alert passer coupled to said alert detector;
an artificial intelligence response receiver; and
an artificial intelligence response forwarder coupled to said artificial intelligence
25 response receiver.

46. The apparatus of claim 43, further including:
an SMS or MMS forwarding message receiver;
an SMS or MMS device identification retriever coupled to said SMS forwarding
30 message receiver;
an SMS or MMS message formatter; and

an SMS or MMS message forwarder coupled to said SMS message formatter and to said SMS device identification retriever.

47. The apparatus of claim 43, further including:
5 an image receiver;
 an animated character image renderer and to said image receiver; and
 an animated character saver coupled to said animated character image renderer.
48. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein said animated character renderer comprises:
10 an extraneous information remover;
 a three-dimensional image modifier coupled to said extraneous information
 remover;
 a preconfigured position image manipulator coupled to said three-dimensional
 image modifier; and
15 a movement interpolator coupled to said preconfigured position image
 manipulator.
49. The apparatus of claim 48, wherein said animated character renderer further
 comprises:
20 a three-dimensional geometry engine coupled to said movement interpolator.
50. An apparatus for instant messaging on a computer system, including:
 means for receiving an instant message (IM) containing content from a sender;
 means for displaying an animated character associated with said sender; and
25 means for delivering said content to a user through said animated character.
51. The apparatus of claim 50, further including:
 means for determining an identification of said sender of said IM from said IM.
- 30 52. The apparatus of claim 51, further including:

means for sending a request to a server with said identification of said sender;
and

means for receiving said animated character associated with said sender from
said server.

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53. The apparatus of claim 50, wherein said means for delivering includes:
means for converting text from said IM into audio through text-to-speech
synthesis; and
means for playing said audio.

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54. The apparatus of claim 53, wherein said means for delivering further includes:
means for animating said character in synchronization with said playing of said
audio.

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55. The apparatus of claim 53, wherein said means for delivering further includes:
means for detecting an emoticon in said IM; and
means for animating said character in a way that reflects said emoticon.

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56. The apparatus of claim 50, wherein said means for displaying includes means for
displaying said animated character outside of an IM window.

57. The apparatus of claim 56, further including means for allowing a user to move
said animated character anywhere on the screen.

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58. The apparatus of claim 50, further including:
means for periodically retrieving advertisement details from a server;
means for downloading an animated character specified to represent said
advertisement;

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means for displaying said animated character specified to represent said
advertisement; and
means for delivering content specified for said advertisement

59. The apparatus of claim 50, further including:
means for sending an alert to a server;
means for receiving a response containing content from said server generated by
5 an artificial intelligence (AI) application;
means for displaying an animated character associated with said AI application;
and
means for delivering said content to a user through said animated character
associated with said AI application.
- 10 60. The apparatus of claim 59, wherein said means for sending an alert includes:
means for sending a message indicating that a web search is to be performed;
and
means for sending keywords to search in said web search.
- 15 61. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein said means for delivering said content
comprises means for delivering results of said web search.
- 20 62. The apparatus of claim 50, further including:
means for allowing the user to select from one or more predefined animated
characters to be displayed on a recipient's computer system when said user sends an IM
message to said recipient.
- 25 63. The apparatus of claim 50, further including:
means for allowing the user to upload an image to be used in creating an
animated character to be displayed on a recipient's computer system when said user
sends an IM message to said recipient.
- 30 64. An apparatus for managing an Instant Messaging (IM) system, including:
means for receiving a request from a user for an animated character, said request
including an identification of a sender of an IM message to said user;

means for querying a database with said identification;
means for receiving information regarding said animated character from said
database; and
means for forwarding said information regarding said animated character to said
5 user.

65. An apparatus for managing an Instant Messaging (IM) system of claim 64
including means for forming a queue by creating a dynamic array and
inserting incoming message into said queue;
10 means for controlling the timing of operations of actions in the queue and when
required displaying an animated character associated with said sender; and
means for delivering said content to a user through said animated character on an
output screen without being bounded by the instant message (IM) window.

15 66. An apparatus for managing an Instant Messaging (IM) system of claim 65
wherein the means for delivering said content on an output screen allows a plurality of
animated characters determined in the queue of messages from senders to be
simultaneously displayed on the imaging screen and the messages to be sequentially
delivered through the respective sender's animated character.

20 67. An apparatus for managing an Instant Messaging (IM) system of claim 66
including means for the messaging window to be continually scanned and compared
with previous messaging to determine if message has been received, and if received
analyses message and places in queue.

25 68. The apparatus of claim 64, wherein said information regarding said animated
character includes a location for an animation file representing said animated character.

69. The apparatus of claim 64, further including:
30 means for receiving a periodic request from said user for an advertisement;
means for selecting an advertisement from an advertising database; and

means for serving said advertisement to said user.

70. The apparatus of claim 64, further including:

means for detecting when an alert is sent from said user in an IM message, said

5 IM message also including content;

means for passing said alert and said content to an artificial intelligence

application;

means for receiving a response from said artificial intelligence application; and

means for forwarding said response to said user.

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71. The apparatus of claim 70, wherein said artificial intelligence application provides interactive help to said user.

72. The apparatus of claim 71, wherein said artificial intelligence application

15 provides web searching capabilities to said user.

73. The apparatus of claim 64, further including:

means for receiving a message from said user indicating that the user wishes for all messages to be forwarded to a device utilizing the Short Message Service (SMS) or

20 Multimedia Message (MMS) format;

means for retrieving an identification of said device from a database;

means for formatting a message intended for said user in SMS or MMS; and

means for forwarding said formatted message to a communications gateway

along with said identification.

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74. The apparatus of claim 73, wherein said identification is a cellular phone number.

75. The apparatus of claim 73, further including:

means for receiving an image from said user;

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means for rendering said image as an animated character; and

means for saving said rendered image in said database.

76. The apparatus of claim 76, further including:
means for cropping said image.

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77. The apparatus of claim 75, wherein said means for rendering comprises:
means for removing extraneous information from said image;
means for modifying said image to a three-dimensional image;
means for manipulating said image into preconfigured positions; and
10 means for interpolating movements from a base position to a new position for
each of one or more animations for said animated character to perform.

78. The apparatus of claim 77, wherein said means for rendering further comprises:
means for introducing said image to a three-dimensional geometry engine.

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79. A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program
of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for instant messaging on
a computer system, the method including:
receiving an instant message (IM) containing content from a sender;
20 displaying an animated character associated with said sender; and
delivering said content to a user through said animated character.

80. A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program
of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for managing an Instant
25 Messaging (IM) system, the method including:
receiving a request from a user for an animated character, said request including
an identification of a sender of an IM message to said user;
querying a database with said identification;
receiving information regarding said animated character from said database; and
30 forwarding said information regarding said animated character to said user.